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LOCAL PRIDE EVENTS
ACROSS THE UPPER MIDWEST

A REGIONAL
CALENDAR OF
PRIDE EVENTS

Small Town & Community Pride Issue

730
MAY 18-31, 2023
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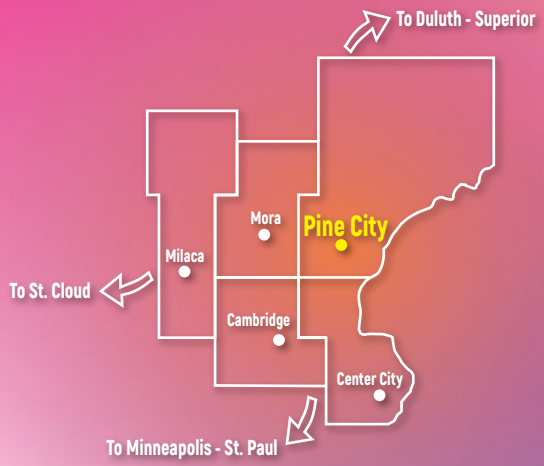

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ON THE COVER
Members of the South Central Minnesota Pride Committee.
Photo by Randy Stern

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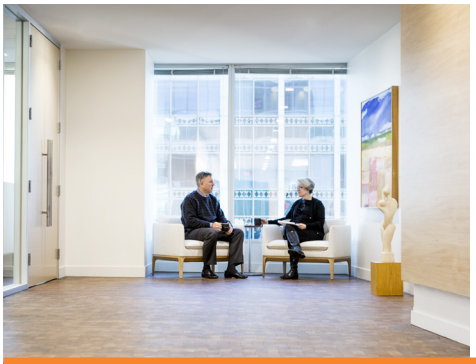

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The Season Of Pride Is Upon Us

BY RANDY STERN

Welcome to the 2023 edition of our Small Town/Community Pride issue!

It is back this year for one reason: You loved it! You saw yourselves and your local community featured in last year's edition. We brought a lot of communities together – some of which you never thought would have a pride celebration. The impact of last year's issue was beyond measure!

Since the deadline passed on last year's issue, we heard from almost a dozen more Pride celebrations across the state and beyond our state line that never registered on our radar. Some responded to last year's issue asking us "what about our Pride celebration? Are you going to cover us?"

I am happy to say that we're about to present over 22 Pride celebrations across Minnesota and over the state line. That's more than the 19 we included in last year's issue.

These celebrations range from smaller events in the Twin Cities and across the state in practically every corner of it. There are a few that will be celebrating its first Pride event. You might be surprised where these events are taking place.

Given our experience last year, I had to see for myself someone of these events firsthand. It was

Photo by Randy Stern

quite the variety, from small events in the park to larger celebrations. With that said, I thank the organizers in Rochester, Pine City, Eau Claire, Chaska, and Bloomington for your hospitality and community last year.

Therefore, I have a few notes to share about this issue.

It is always a challenge when you are putting on your first Pride event. In this issue, we are featuring the newest Pride events this year in Hudson, Monticello, Saint Paul and Stillwater. There are quite a few that are putting on their second, third or fourth Pride event.

Conversely, it is always great to see some events return after years of navigating through the COVID-19 Pandemic. Namely, Golden Valley Pride.

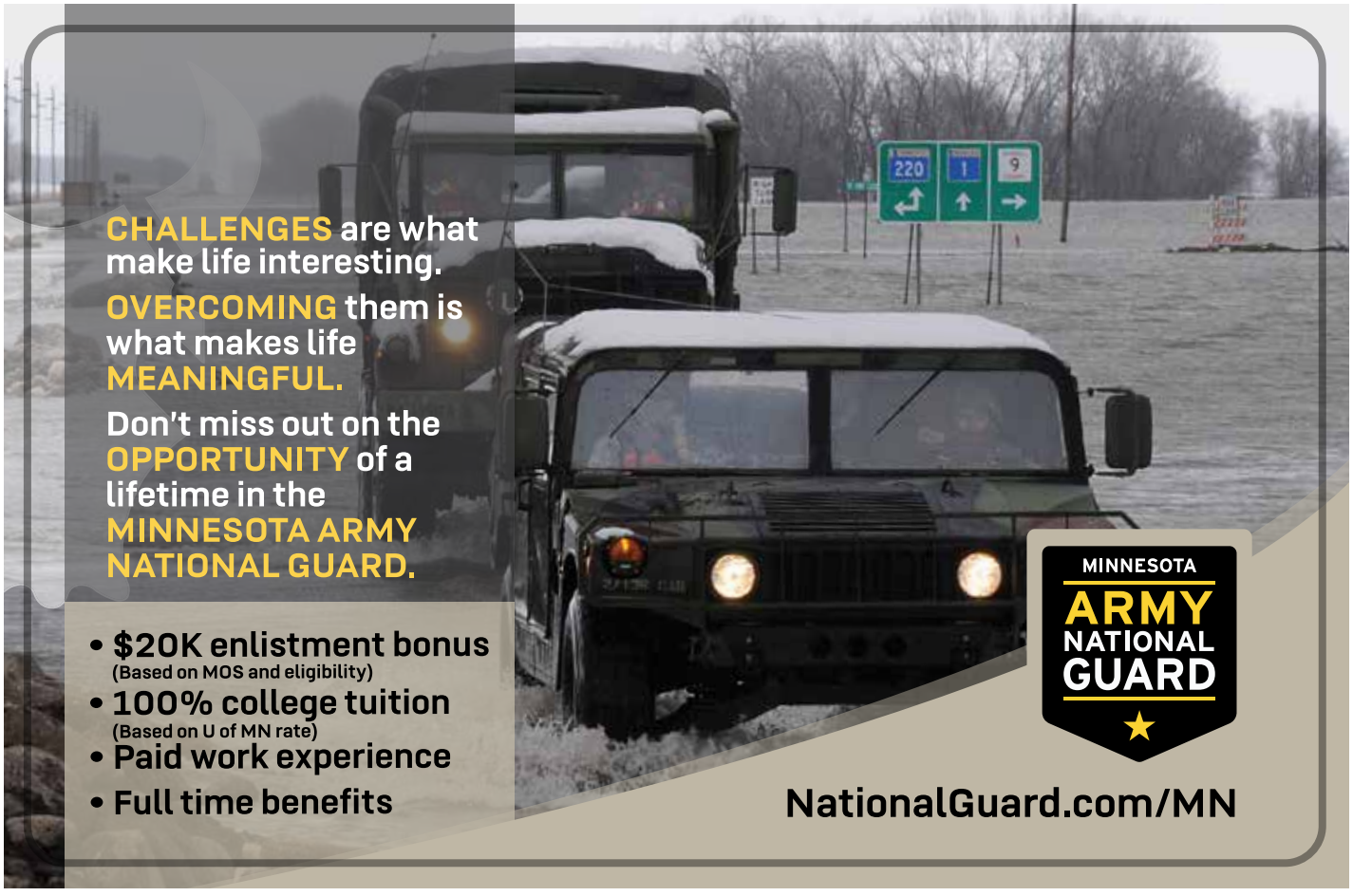
If there is a theme that is common amongst these Pride events, it is the people. No matter what part of the state you go, you can feel the energy of Pride.

On top of spotlighting 24 Pride events in this issue, we have a calendar to keep track of these and many more from beyond our state lines – including two over the border in Canada!

You probably heard the term "June is busting out all over." So is LGBTQ Pride. We're not even done with featuring stories of Pride – wait until you see our next issue!

One thing to take to heart as we dive into Pride season: We're all in it together. No matter who you are…you are welcomed. You are loved. You are protected. You are seen, heard, and uplifted by all of us.

Now, go ahead and celebrate! No matter where you are, attend your nearest Pride celebration and be seen, heard, welcomed, loved, and protected! ▮



A Play For All Reasons

BY E.B. BOATNER

"*Something's rotten in the state off Denmark*" "*To thine own self be true*" "*Oh what a noble mind is here o'erthrown*," "*Good night sweet prince*"

Whether you ever read the full text in a classroom; whether or not you've ever seen the play on a stage, you've likely, at some time in your life, quoted Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Right now, the Guthrie is offering you the opportunity to discover your sources, and learn even more for future use.

Under the direction of Sir Tyrone Guthrie, *Hamlet* was the first play produced in the eponymous new theater at Vinland Place on May 7, 1963, and later, 43 years to the day on May 7, 2006, directed then by Joe Dowling, *Hamlet* was the final play produced before the Guthrie's shift to its current location. Today, Artistic Director Joseph Haj's *Hamlet* marks the melancholy Dane's fifth Guthrie appearance, replete with its own interpretations, nuances and musical accompaniment, as 2023 also celebrates the Guthrie Theater's 60th Diamond Anniversary.

What draws one to produce or to attend for the first or nth time this most lauded of Shakespeare's plays? To *not* say, "Oh I've seen that," but to return irresistibly to see how Hamlet's shock and awe will be presented *this* time, under *this* director, with *these* players? How will those lines you may already know be spoken *this* evening?

The very fact that so many of the Bard's lines have been familiar for some 400 years can be something of a burden for the performer wo knows it behooves him to deliver in a voice that is fresh and alive, while in turn, the audience waits in anticipation; will they receive a mere recitation of Shakespeare's written words, or heartfelt emotions wrung from the living embodiment of the character?

Do you prefer your Shakespeare decked in full Elizabethan plumage? In full-on military dictator, or draped in *le smoking* with raised martini? Rough or bespoke, Shakespeare can shift your universe. *Hamlet* is suffused with enough passion and intrigue to inhabit any century containing humankind. There are endless angles for discussion and comparison, fraught with themes from revenge to love to insanity or mommy issues. If this be your first *Hamlet*, you've set the conversation bar high.

Michael Braugher's Hamlet is imposing, even as his senses waver; Regina Marie Williams and John Catron are regal matching evil with aplomb; Ray Dooley's Polonius humorous yet less overstuffed than many before him. In short, a more measured, less chaotic interpretation than some that intensifies rather than clears the poisoned air.

The sets lean to the brutal, yet the lofty, soaring verticals and stolid solids, under the mastery of Robert Wierzel nuanced lighting, evoke more a chill Falling Waters than blindfolds and last cigarettes. One could think of warming fires within, if not for the festering corruption…

Strike Elizabethan ruffs; these costumes are muted, echoing the dark columns rising out of sight and suiting the castle's mood and temperament. King Claudius, is in Hamlet's father's place, now married to Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Their estate proclaimed in the cut of their clothes, Hamlet's darkness in less courtly garments.

Throughout, musical sighs and riffs enhance the action; you finally spot a lone musician just offstage, now and then plucking, tapping his motley array of instruments as if just by happenstance he's mirroring intensifying, underscoring what's transpiring before the footlights. Eerie, lovely, unique–like this production.

On the Guthrie Wurtle Stage through May 11. ∎

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Take The Cannoli

BY CARLA WALDEMAR

The Godfather was right: Leave the gun, but definitely take the cannoli. At Pinoli, they're terrific: delicate and crunchy pastry tubes filled with creamy, demurely sweet and lemony ricotta bolstered with pistachios ($4), just the way they appear in your dreams.

Lemon Ricotta, Pistachio Cannolis, Olive Oil Poached Tuna, Spaghetti alla Chitarra, Blueberry Lemon Pinoli Hard Seltzer. Photos by Mike Hnida

And while you're at it, take the cabbage, too. It's an unexpected hero, a star among many on the antipasti list that leads off the kitchen's offerings in the new Uptown café housed in the former Amore site.

That cabbage! Who would suspect the unsung peon of the vegetable world to steal the glory on a list of starters? A huge steamed hunk arrives on a bed of nutty-sweet squash puree, crowned with a crunchy coat of savory pecorino cheese under a cloud of bread crumbs: That's it, and it's comfort food at its finest.

The antipasti list ($9-14, plus a sumptuous collation of cured meats and cheeses, $23) also showcases hefty fingers of focaccia with choice of dips that include a deliriously pungent basil-pine nut pesto, a suave and creamy meld of white bean puree and rosemary (our choices) or whipped bacalao (salt cod).

Those namesake pine nuts reappear in a lavish, meant-for-sharing salad of baby greens, herbs and pea tendrils anointed with a light red-wine vinaigrette. Other starters include braised mushrooms with white beans; roasted broccoli rabe; an enticing-sounding pairing of burrata cheese with golden beets, grapefruit and pistachios, and more.

Five choices confront you on the pasta list ($12-14 for half portions, $15-28 full). If I were a rich man, as the fiddler sang, I'd opt for the spaghetti alla chitarra, $28—house-made noodles tossed with lobster, lemon, garlic, chili and butter.

Instead, we were mightily pleased with our plate of ravioli-like pansotti: plump pillows of pasta, a bit undercooked and on the firm side, cuddling generous dollops of Swiss chard and herbs softened with cream and a savory walnut pesto. Lovely! The linguine that followed was deliciously enriched with meaty braised mushrooms and a sweet-savory cashew cream (I know: Who would have thought?) Next time: the gnocchi tossed with seafood or the cascarecce, starring basil pesto and Parmesan.

As our secondo (6 choices, $19 for a frito misto of calamari and veggies to $46 for a ribeye), we voted for the tuna, to be poached in olive oil and accompanied by salad greens, fennel, orange and olives. I (unwittingly) expected a tuna steak, but no—instead, Triscuit-sized slices, ideally ruddy but presented cool-to-cold (intentional or not? I have no idea) with the same greens we'd enjoyed in the earlier salad, this time scented with fennel, orange and (the menu says) olives, which we couldn't locate. I'll return to attack the lamb meatballs or the Great Lakes whitefish, too. In the mood for pizza instead? The menu offers five inventive combos, $16-22).

And that cannelloni! Or satisfy your sweet tooth with a nutty, chocolate-rich panna cotta or, my choice when in Italy in summer's heat, the affogato al caffe: a glass of chilled espresso harboring vanilla ice cream.

The setting is bright, spacious, and welcoming. And for parties of four or more, the kitchen will orchestrate a specially-coursed menu, $62 each (add wine, $35 pp). Service was friendly, full of info and adept. Benvenuto, Pinoli: a nice addition to the dining scene. ▮

Pinoli

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2023 Regional Pride Calendar

MAY 20, 2023
ROCHESTER PRIDE
Soldiers Memorial Field, Rochester, MN
www.rochmnpride.org

JUNE 1-3, 2023
MILWAUKEE PRIDEFEST
Summerfest Grounds, Milwaukee, WI
www.pridefest.com

JUNE 2-4, 2023
ABERDEEN AREA PRIDE
Downtown Aberdeen, Aberdeen, SD
www.facebook.com/aberdeenareapride

JUNE 3, 2023
EAST CENTRAL MN PRIDE
Robinson Park, Pine City, MN
www.eastcentralminnesotapride.org

JUNE 3, 2023
NORTHFIELD PRIDE IN THE PARK
Central Park, Northfield, MN
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087417023864

JUNE 3, 2023
WAUSAU PRIDE
Downtown Wausau, Wausau, WI
www.wausauriverdistrict.org/wausau-pride

JUNE 9-11, 2023
MARSHALL PRIDE
Festival: Independence Park, Marshall, MN
www.marshallpride.org/home

JUNE 9-11, 2023
CAPITAL CITY PRIDE
Historic East Village, Des Moines, IA
www.capitalcitypride.org

JUNE 10, 2023
BORDERLAND PRIDE
International Falls, MN and Fort Frances, ON
www.borderlandpride.org

JUNE 10, 2023
GOLDEN VALLEY PRIDE
Brookview Park, Golden Valley, MN
www.goldenvalleypride.com

JUNE 10, 2023
HASTINGS PRIDE
Jaycee Park, Hastings, MN
www.ideaorganization.org/upcoming-events

JUNE 10, 2023
ST. PAUL PRIDE
Rice Park, St. Paul, MN
www.STPPride.org

Photo by Randy Stern

JUNE 10, 2023
CR PRIDE PARADE
Cedar Rapids, IA
www.crprideia.com

JUNE 10, 2023
CHIPPEWA VALLEY PRIDE IN THE PARK
Phoenix Park, Eau Claire, WI
www.cvlgbt.org/pride

JUNE 10, 2023
SIOUX FALLS PRIDE
Sioux Falls, SD
www.siouxfallspride.org

JUNE 10, 2023
STEVENS POINT PRIDE
Stevens Point, WI
www.stevenspointpride.com

JUNE 15-18, 2023
CENTRAL WI PRIDE
Aniwa,WI
www.centralwipride.org

JUNE 15-18, 2023
FERGUS PRIDE
Festival: Pebble Lake Park, Fergus Falls, MN
www.facebook.com/FergusFallsSAGA

JUNE 17, 2023
LAKES AREA PRIDE
Lake Brophy Park Visitors Center, Alexandria, MN
www.facebook.com/LakesAreaPride

JUNE 17, 2023
CHASKA PRIDE PICNIC
McKnight Park, Chaska, MN
www.chaskamn.gov/131/Human-Rights-Commission

JUNE 17, 2023
HUDSON PRIDE
Lakefront Park, Hudson, WI
www.hudsonwipride.com

JUNE 17, 2023
IOWA CITY PRIDE
Downtown Iowa City, Iowa City, IA
www.iowacitypride.org

JUNE 17, 2023
THUNDER PRIDE
Thunder Bay, ON
www.thunderpride.ca

JUNE 18, 2023
MAPLE GROVE PRIDE PARADE
Downtown Maple Grove, MN
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070396981630

JUNE 23, 2023
EDEN PRAIRIE PARTY FOR PRIDE
Staring Lake Amphitheatre, Eden Prairie, MN
Event starts at 8:30 AM
www.edenprairie.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/19928/17

JULY 7-8, 2023
WEST ST. PAUL PRIDE
West St. Paul Sports Complex, West St. Paul, MN
www.wsppride.com

JULY 8, 2023
CR PRIDE FESTIVAL
NewBo City Market, Cedar Rapids, IA
www.crprideia.com

JULY 8, 2023
WRIGHT-SHERBURNE PRIDE
Ellison Park, Monticello, MN

AUGUST 3-7, 2023
STILLWATER PRIDE
Downtown Stillwater, MN
www.lavendermagazine.com/stillwaterpride

AUGUST 10-13, 2023
FARGO-MOORHEAD PRIDE
Festival: Island Park, Fargo, ND
www.fmpride.com

AUGUST 12, 2023
LAKE PEPIN PRIDE
Stockholm Village Park Campground, Stockholm, WI
www.facebook.com/lakepepinpride

AUGUST 14-20, 2023
MINNESOTA POC PRIDE FESTIVAL
Minneapolis, MN
www.mnpocpride.org

AUGUST 18, 2023
IRON PRIDE
Silver Lake, Virginia, MN

AUGUST 25-26, 2023
CEDAR VALLEY PRIDE
Waterloo, IA
www.cedarvalleypride.com

AUGUST 26-27, 2023
BEMIDJI PRIDE
Rail River Folk School, Bemidji, MN
www.pridesupportnetwork.org/bemidji-pride

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 4, 2023
DULUTH SUPERIOR PRIDE
Festival: Bayfront Park, Duluth, MN; Parade: Downtown Superior, WI
www.duluthsuperiorpride.com

SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2023
BRAINERD LAKES PRIDE
Gregory Park, Brainerd, MN
www.facebook.com/brainerdlakespride

SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2023
SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA PRIDE
Riverfront Park, Mankato, MN
www.facebook.com/scmnpride

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023
LA CROSSE PRIDE
Riverside Park, La Crosse, WI
www.facebook.com/lacrosse.pride

SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2023
DECORAH PRIDE
Decorah, IA
www.decorahpride.org

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2023
SAINT CLOUD PRIDE
Festival: Lake George/Eastman Park, St. Cloud, MN
www.stcpride.org

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PRIDE
Kordiak Park, Columbia Heights, MN
www.facebook.com/cohipride

OCTOBER 7, 2023
AUSTIN PRIDE
Cedar River Farmer's Market, Austin, MN ▮

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Photo by Randy Stern

Mankato Proud

South Central Minnesota Pride Unlocks The Key City

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

In south central Minnesota, there stands a tree that is more than a tree.

The tree is a golden ginkgo—in early September, its foliage looks like a giant, honey-colored snowflake. The tree is not the tallest seedling in the area, not by a long chalk, but it's firmly rooted, its future rich with xylem and promise. The golden ginkgo is surrounded by a green commons, and the green commons is surrounded a town and a river. The town and the river are surrounded by fields of corn and wheat and soybeans. The river flows, the wind blows, the billowed water and the willowed air whispering to the tree in the same golden voice.

Under the tree's bole, a bronze plaque reads:

In memory of Jessica Flatequal
1973-2019
Nevertheless, she persisted.
In love, pride, and power.

This tree is the living commemoration of a Mankato queer icon, dedicated by her widow, Maria Bevacqua. "I chose this location because Pridefest was held in Riverfront Park for many years, under Jessica's direction," Bevacqua explains. "She had a great relationship with city administrators and staff, which helped make Pridefest such a successful annual event."

That's putting it mildly. South Central Minnesota Pride's first Pridefest was little more than a Walton family picnic, minus the Blue Ridge Mountains: in 2002, 150 folks made a social statement against bias with watermelon and Wonder Bread. Although that was no small achievement in and of itself, the indefatigable energy of Executive Director Jessica Flatequal, abetted by many other energies, transformed the humble, bighearted pipsqueak of a soiree into an event that attracts thousands of people and spans several days during the ninth month of each and every year.

A key to Flatequal's success was her natural knack for building win-win bridges between South Central Minnesota Pride and the city of Mankato. "I think one of the things that Jessica left behind with her legacy was as an example–she set an example as a leader, like always acting unselfishly," current South Central Minnesota Pride committee member Jeremy Redlien posits. "She was a tireless leader, completely devoted to LGBTQ rights, somebody who is always going to be fighting for people. for everybody."

Flatequal died of liver disease at the tragically-young age of 46, but her legacy, Pridefest, still grows within Riverfront Park…just as surely as does her tree of life. This year, late on the morning of September 9, during the Pride Parade—or, more precisely, during the Jessica Flatequal Pride Parade–school boys and school girls and queer folk and straight allies will jig down Mankato's Riverfront Drive, happily nudged by a marching band beat.

Expressions of Pride won't be visible just in front of parade spectators, though—those expressions will be visible behind the spectators, as well: rainbow flags will have been distributed as tokens of gratitude to the local businesses who will willingly shutter their shops for one day in deference to the parade route, in support of Pride. Notes South Central Minnesota Pride committee member Megan Poehler, "When you're walking down the parade, and you see all the businesses have flags in their windows. They'll keep it up year round."

The bliss-kissed anarchy will terminate at Mankato's Riverfront Park where Pridefest 2023 will unfold in earnest. That shindig is scheduled from noon to 4:00 pm and will include, according to the website, "A Drag Show, Vendors & Food, a Kids Activity Tent, and more!" An entire weekend-plus of events will tether to this tent pole, including a cause especially dear to Flatequal who, during her day job, served as the Director of Gender and Sexuality Programs and adjunct professor at Minnesota State University. "This year, as an organization, we look to continue to grow our efforts in educational programming," declares Charlie Johnston, the current board chair for South Central Minnesota Pride. "We've done a lot to partner with other organizations throughout the community."

In a mostly-rustic environment like South Central Minnesota, the need for Pride's benefits are perennial…so South Central Minnesota Pride's work is perennial, as well. "We try to do at least one event per month," Johnston reports. "We host a Queers and Beers event once a month, as well as a Queers and Coffee event where people can just get together and connect with other people and a way to make new friends, to find LGBTQ+ friendly, welcoming businesses around town. We see a lot of success with our monthly social events."

Currently, this welcoming is most sorely needed within a specific demographic. "I think that as we continue to focus on youth programming, that's going to expand," predicts Lisa Wood, another South Central Minnesota Pride committee member. "We're pretty excited about that because when you go to some of these events and see the youth having a safe space to be, and understanding what that means for them, it all starts at home."

Some of Flatequal's work remains undone, some hearts hardened and some minds unchanged…for now, anyway. "There are people who are not there yet," Johnston admits. "That helps us to remember that we still have work to do and still want to continue that education to change people's minds and help people understand that it is okay to be a welcoming, safe environment."

But no matter how welcoming or safe its environment, a tree can't have lengthening branches without dependable roots. "We [South Central Minnesota Pride] continue to see growth every year," Johnston says. "Last year was our biggest for the parade, biggest for the number of vendors that we had in our park, in the festival, as well as the highest attended festival, so we're excited to see that grow, continue each year and see more and more people come."

Jessica Flatequal's twin legacies of Pridefest and the golden ginkgo—both alive and lively, both rooted in Riverfront Park—will stretch into the future…simply because each has to. "As we think about the legacy in the organization that Jessica helped to build," Johnson concludes, "I think it was a groundbreaking effort at the time to really think about what we can do to make sure the community is inclusive to everyone."

www.scmnpride.org ▮

Austin Pride

BY AURORA SMITH

Closing the year's Pride season, the city of Austin welcomes on October 7th, with the festivities starting at 12:00 PM with the festival being held at the grassy area across the street from the Paramount Theatre (125 4th Avenue NE).

Austin Pride is still in the planning stages but expect both family and night time fun! The family fun part is hosted by Austin's Human Rights Commission. Nighttime fun will be hosted by the local bar commission in Austin. There will be local vendors from businesses to informational booths, food trucks, and entertainment.

Their hometown drag queen, Roxi Manacoochi, will be the main talent.

History

2022 was Austin's first-ever Pride festival, with about 800 people in attendance. Local vendors like Everything Succs (Succulents and Plants) and Phynix Farm Candle were there, as well as informational vendors like Planned Parenthood, The Trevor Project, and Trans Empowerment Project.

There were also food trucks like B-Lo Zero Sno Cones Donuts, InfuznFoods, La Borinqua Puerto Rican Food, and Cookie Dough Bliss.

Children enjoyed face painting, field games, chalk drawings, a balloon arch, and more. Local artist Mason Pacholl and PAPA from the local Riverland Community College provided entertainment.

2023 and Things to Do

This year, they expect to double the entertainment and fun, creating an atmosphere where everyone can be themselves. "We want to give hope to the younger generations that they have support and they are wanted," said An Le, Austin's Pride Board Committee Chair.

While in Austin, enjoy dozens of types of delicious restaurants, from American to Mexican and more. Sip delicious coffee as you explore history or art museums, take in a show, or explore Lake Louise State Park. ▮

Brainerd Lakes Pride

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

The best part about Pride is that it isn't subjected to a single weekend or month per year. One of the communities celebrating Pride in September is Brainerd Lakes. The Brainerd Lakes Pride Organization focuses on three important keywords through their non-profit: acceptance, awareness, and advocacy. This year's activities kick off on Friday, September 8, and run through Sunday, September 10.

Every year, the team strives to elevate community presence and strengthen the LGBTQ community through activities, involvement, and outreach. Each day, the pride extravaganza offers wondrous activities for all ages. Put on your disco shoes and hit the dance floor because participants will boogie during the free dance party on the first day of the festival. On Saturday, picnics and family activities occur from 10 am to 4 pm. On the final day of the festival, the highly anticipated drag brunch will delight and dazzle attendees during the midday meal.

Ariel Erickson is the president and co-founder of Brainerd Lakes Pride and works with Executive Director and co-founder Adam Sparrow to bring the three-day celebration to Brainerd Lakes. The Brainerd Lakes Pride Organization needs a few volunteers for this year's Pride in the Park event. The flyer asks queer people living in rural Minnesota to share kid-friendly stories on September 16 during the Pride in the Park event. Reports may be sung, written, spoken word, or signed.

In between pride festivities, take a day trip to Gull Lake and reflect on the day, or relax your mind during a hike on Paul Bunyan State Trail. ▮

(Left) Photo by Eric Johnson, Austin Daily Herald (Right) Photo by Randy Stern

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Chaska Pride Picnic

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

Save the date for Chaska's annual Pride Picnic, Saturday, June 17 from 3-6 pm at McKnight Park! This will be the third year for this Chaska celebration, a collaboration between the Chaska Human Rights Commission (HRC), Chaska High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance, and the Chaska Parks and Recreation department.

The Pride picnic is a family-friendly, community event where folks can gather in one of Chaska's public spaces to celebrate their LGBTQ community and the rich diversity they bring to Chaska. This Pride event is unique in that it is planned in collaboration with local high school student members of the Chaska High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club, so there are a lot of activities centered around youth and creativity – tie-dying, face painting, jewelry-making, and even a community art project that everyone is invited to participate in!

The event will include free ice cream (and a non-dairy alternative) provided by the HRC along with food truck options. The Carver County Library will be present as well as some local businesses and organizations. A DJ will be there as well to provide the backdrop and keep the energy going throughout the afternoon!

Says the Human Rights Commission, "This is really about building community, and making sure that our LGBTQ residents and their friends and families feel seen, valued, and supported. This is just our third year, and we keep growing, so the HRC hopes that it continues to be an event that people want to attend." ▮

Chaska Pride Picnic
Saturday, June 17 • 3-6 pm
McKnight Park
2905 McKnight Rd., Chaska, MN

Columbia Heights Pride

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

Who says all the fun has to stay in June? Join the annual community pride celebration in Columbia Heights on Saturday, September 23 from 10 am – 4 pm in Kordiak Park.

The Columbia Heights Pride Festival is a "big-city" event with a small-town feel. (Fun fact: they were last year's *Lavender* Community Pride cover story!) Held in the beautiful Kordiak Park, it is a more intimate and community-focused event than some of the bigger celebrations.

A true family-friendly event, middle and high school students are encouraged to attend –bring your pride flags and buttons! Some of their most popular events and activities include face painting, live music, dancing, pet "paw-rade," a playground for the kiddos, and family-friendly vendors and performers. These activities are a priority so people of all ages can attend and feel safe and accepted.

This year, they are excited to welcome back some of their most popular musical performers, including Calliope Women's Chorus, Lily Kleinschmit, Lisa Deguiseppi, Transcendence Cabaret, and King Kiki. Other amazing performances will conducted by students who live right there in the community!

Also returning is last year's big hit, the Pride Pet "Paw-rade," in which dogs show off their costumes and rainbow colors while parading around the park with their humans.

And no Pride festival is complete without delicious food! They currently have KCM Eggrolls confirmed and are looking for two more. If you have a food truck and are interested in participating, please reach out to pride@heightsnext.org. ▮

Columbia Heights Pride
Saturday, September 23, 10 am -4 pm
Kordiak Park
1845 49th Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN

(Left) Photo by Celine Hage. (Right) Photo by Kiki Latham

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For More Info, visit
www.ecpurplecircle.blogspot.com

Duluth-Superior Pride

BY SUSAN SWAVELY

A week of fun Pride events you can't miss out on is the Duluth-Superior Pride, happening from August 31st-September 1st.

For the past few years, Abby Gannon has served as co-chair and treasurer of Duluth-Superior Pride, which is a series of Pride events that take place during the week leading up to Labor Day. Gannon says, "We have local businesses hosting many things throughout the entire week including drag shows, family events, teen and youth programs, the Pride Parade and even a 3-hour train excursion up the North Shore. It all culminates with our day long festival at the beautiful Bayfront Park on the shore of Lake Superior in Duluth, MN."

The more intimate events begin as early as the Monday or Tuesday before Labor Day, but Gannon tells us "our official kickoff event will be Thursday August 31st at the Depot in downtown Duluth with our Mayor's Reception, followed by our biggest events going on through the weekend and finishing up on Labor Day itself."

Visitors should expect a huge festival on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, which exhibits more than 120 vendors, food, music, drag, and other entertainment, as well as programming designed specifically for children. That's not all, though! Gannon says, "Other events include the PartyX light and music party at the Duluth Flame on Friday night, the annual Block Party in Superior at the Superior Flame and the Main Club, the Pride Parade on Sunday in Superior, drag shows, the Foo Foo Choo Choo train excursion also on Sunday, and much much more."

Pride is so much more than a celebration of who we are as a community. Gannon says it best: "Pride gives everyone a chance to freely express themselves in a safe environment and connect to their own communities as well as give us the visibility to show the world that we are here and continue to deserve the same love and acceptance as everyone else."

For a full list of events and times, visit www.duluthsuperiorpride.com ▮

East Central Minnesota Pride

BY SUSAN SWAVELY

East Central Minnesota possesses a ton of pride every year, and this upcoming pride month is no different! The 18th annual 'Pride in the Park' event is happening for all to enjoy in downtown Pine City, Saturday, June 3rd, 2023. This event celebrates the Pride of LGBTQ folks in the communities of Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs counties.

This year's theme is "Pride Alive, 365," and as organizer Don Quaintance says, "Pride is more than just one day out of the year… For us, it's personal. Pride is alive in us 365 days a year."

Pride is always important; East Central Minnesota knows this intimately, and has a rich history concerning LGBTQ Pride. In fact, according to Chair of East Central Minnesota Pride, Phil Schroeder, "East Central Minnesota Pride was born in 2005, as a fifth anniversary of the East Central Men's Circle, a discussion group for gay, bisexual, and questioning men of the region. It was the first rural pride to be held not only in Minnesota, but anywhere outside of a metro area."

East Central Minnesota Pride is extremely excited to welcome Mark Joseph and the American Soul, as well as Jacob Mahon and New Salty Dog, back to the stage for a Pride performance! In addition, the Roxxy Hall Band, an all-women rock-n-soul ensemble, beloved to the Midwest since the 1980s, on the pride stage for the first time! You don't want to miss out on this beautiful display of LGBTQ joy this summer!

Check out more details at www.eastcentralminnesotapride.org ▮

(Left) Photo by Randy Stern (Right) Photo by East Central MN Pride

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Fergus Falls Pride

BY RANDY STERN

Now in its third year, Fergus Falls and SAGA Youth (Sexuality and Gender Alliance) will be celebrating its Pride celebration June 15-18.

Activities begin on the 15th at Spies Market Pavilion (117 S. Union Ave.) until 8:00 PM. This kick-off event will have both vendors and community support/educational tables.

On Friday, a Pride Party will be held to honor the late Jette Frandson – the inspiration for the formation of SAGA Youth – who passed away prior to last year's Fergus Pride. The party will be held at Fergus Brewing (1683 Ottertail Dr.).

On Saturday evening, the Catwalk Party will return to the stage at the Dining Car #423/Steel Wheels (423 S. Cascade St.) starting at 8:00 PM.

Fergus Pride culminates with the Pride in The Park at Pebble Lake Swimming Beach (2300 Pebble Lake Beach Dr.).

With a weekend full of activities, you probably want some wind-down time. Located near the source of the Mississippi River, Fergus Falls is a center for great recreational opportunities. With the Otter Trail Scenic Byway, you can enjoy great landscapes while taking the history and the beauty of this part of Minnesota.

Why not spend the extended weekend in Fergus Falls and celebrate Pride? Lavender Magazine 2022 Community Award winner Krystyne Frandson, along with the SAGA Youth board, its members, the LGBTQ community in Otter Tail County and beyond, along with the city of Fergus Falls welcomes you!

For more information, log on to SAGA's Facebook page for the latest updates: www.facebook.com/FergusFallsSAGA ▮

Golden Valley Pride

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

They're back! After a pandemic-induced hiatus, Golden Valley Pride is excited to announce they are back this year to celebrate their fifth annual Pride festival on Saturday, June 10 from 12 -6 pm at Brookview Park.

Did you know that Golden Valley has more LGBTQ households per capita than any city in Minnesota? This awesome suburban pride celebration highlights the city's LGBTQ families, friends, and allies in the spirit of promoting greater understanding of Golden Valley's rich and growing diversity. Golden Valley Pride Festival began in 2016 and was the first suburban pride festival in Minnesota, attracting roughly 5,000 attendees each year.

You can look forward to food and drinks from vendors like Junebug Carolina Flair, Ben & Jerry's, and Rollin Nollins BBQ. Don't forget to stop by the beer and wine garden to enjoy craft beer from Utepils, cider from Sociable Cider Werks and plenty of wine options.

There are activities for the whole family at Golden Valley Pride so you can surely bring the younger ones along! This year will include bouncy houses, obstacle courses, and even Giant Jenga for the younger crowd.

And, brand new this year, Golden Valley Pride will have two stages full of entertainment, one large main stage sponsored by General Mills and one smaller community stage on the other side of the park, for double the music. This year you can enjoy performances from musical groups like The Freedom Jazz Band, Outloud!, Jen Burleigh-Bentz, and more.

If you're looking to get your game on, Golden Valley Pride is also holding a few new sporting events this year: the GLASS Volleyball Tournament and Stonewall Sports Kickball exhibition games. You can register for these events online, make sure to register for volleyball by June 1!

Golden Valley Pride couldn't happen without all of its sponsors, and they want to thank all of the individuals and local businesses who have showed their support for 2023.

They can't wait to see you again! ▮

Golden Valley Pride
Saturday, June 10 • 12 – 6 pm
Brookview Park
200 Brookview Pkwy. N., Golden Valley, MN

(Left) Photo by Randy Stern (Right) Photo by Christopher Robinson

Hastings Pride

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

Hastings rings in its 3rd annual Pride celebration this year during the weekend of June 10 through June 12. Celebrating the third year of a successful Pride festival is no small feat, and the activities planned this year represent the tremendous community support toward the LGBTQ+ community.

The Pride festival launches fun-filled activities on June 10. The public is invited to an endless array of talent demonstrations, food trucks, business vendors, community outreach booths, games, open mics, and live performers.

Photo by Randy Stern

However, the peak of the festivities lies in the Pride parade. On Saturday, June 11, walkers, marchers, performers, and guests collide for a community-backed parade with lots and lots and lots of floats dedicated to backing the LGBTQ community in Hastings. Anyone can participate in the parade as long as they fill out a liability waiver.

While exploring the Pride offerings in Hastings, don't forget to check out the other amenities offered in the city. Extreme Sandbox allows adults to tap into their inner child by riding in real excavator machines on obstacle courses or regular sand. If you're not feeling up for the adrenaline surge, opt in for a walking tour of the Victorian city. Stop for lunch at Froth and Cork, an LGBTQ+-friendly business doubling as a cutesy coffee and sandwich shop with beer and wine options. For an authentic Mexican meal, dine in at El Mexican and feast on delicious enchiladas and quesadillas, and after, take a stroll to Schoolhouse Scoop to satiate that sweet tooth. ▮

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La Crosse Pride In The Park

BY AURORA SMITH

This year's La Crosse Pride in The Park will be held on September 9th from 11:00 AM–6:00 PM at 16 E Veterans Memorial Drive in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

As we get closer to September, Pride in the Park is shaping up to be a big hit. To start with the entertainment, Moon Tunes is joining the festivities with live music from 4–10pm. Moon Toons of La Cross is a Valley Rotary Project proud to bring free concerts to Riverside Park.

As you enjoy the music, grab a bite at one of several food trucks attending the event. Enjoy Mia's Kitchen, Apothik, Taco Town, and more. Enjoy pasta, sliders, burgers, ramen, and of course tacos as you stroll the vendor booths.

Speaking of vendors, there are dozens that come to Pride each year. Jewelry, clothing, arts and crafts, baked goods, as well as a multitude of informational booths will be there for you to explore.

Pride in the Park is expecting about 1500+ people to attend, so get ready for a fun crowd and exciting day!

Pride is a fantastic time for the LGBT+ community to celebrate the uniqueness that makes us who we are.

Things to Do

And while you're in La Crosse, there's lots of places to visit. For the sportier types, you can kayak, fish, or cruise the Mississippi. There are historic monuments and downtown areas to enrich your trip, plus art museums and theater to soak up some culture. (Artist's Alley is a particularly nice hidden gem!) Enjoy shopping at local stores or sit back and sip a craft brew. ▮

Marshall Pride

BY AURORA SMITH

Located in Southwest Minnesota, the city of Marshall welcomes to you their Pride on the weekend of June 9–11. This year is the third annual Marshall Pride!

The weekend's events are as follows:

Friday June 9th: Lavender graduation for grads from high schools and colleges at the Varsity Pub (128 W Main St.) in Marshall at 6:00 PM. Karaoke party at Varsity Pub to follow.

Saturday June 10th, 7:00 PM: Enjoy Marshall Pride's second community Drag Show at Brau Brothers (1010 E. Southview Dr.). Newer and more experienced performers will join local and Twin Cities performers. Show to be emceed by Miz Diagnosis, a Twin Cities-based drag performer.

Sunday June 11th: Pride in the Park at Independence Park (1200 E. Lyon St.) in Marshall from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This day will feature food, craft, and other vendors. Also present will be nonprofits to show their support, an ecumenical church service, a 5K marathon, pet adoption, live music, and more.

History

In summer 2021, Marshall's LGBTQ community and longtime allies came together to organize the first community-wide Pride. They wanted the queer youth of Marshall to hear voices of love and support. About 150 people attended with a potluck, games, music, and nonprofits present to show their support for the local LGBTQ community.

Pride 2022 included Marshall's first community drag show at Brau Brothers. The venue sold out and the Saturday night events saw about 200 people attend. That Sunday in the park included vendors, games, a kids' area, bounce houses, and more.

Every year, the goal with Pride is to help more people be brave enough to stand up and speak the truth that queer kids deserve to be affirmed.! ▮

(Left) Photo by Randy Stern. (Right) Photo by Julie Walker

Minnesota People of Color Pride Festival 2023

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

"…the colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky,
Are also on the faces of the people going by…"

The lyrics of the Bob Thiele and George David Weiss song "What a Wonderful World" remind us that Pride is all around if only we're wise enough to see it. As a means to that end, the Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ+ Pride Organization will host an event where folk who bear the brunt of two specific minority statuses—queer and non-white—can meet new people, have conversations, share experiences, and build a more diverse queer community. MN POC Pride will be observed August 14th through August 20th, 2023. The particulars of the days-long celebration are still being ironed out, but past MN POC Prides have included a Mister and Miss Twin Cities Black Pride Pageant as well as a downright-funkadelic boat ride, among many other events.

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

The Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ+ Pride Organization delivers pride by the S.L.I.C.E.—that is, Pride via the means of Sociability, Literary, Inclusion, Charity, and Education. These principles guide the organization's other services, offered even when the days aren't long and the leaves aren't green. As delineated on their website, "Our desired outcome for this project is to open doors and carve pathways for people of color and address health disparities in our communities. We are inspired to construct bridges and fill in the gaps between groups of color and mainstream LGBTQ+ associations." In other words, the Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ+ Pride Organization is determined to make everyone's world into a wonderful world.

www.mnpocpride.org ▮

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Northfield Pride In The Park

BY RANDY STERN

Northfield welcomes us to their Pride in The Park on June 3 – starting at 12:00 PM. It will be held at Central Park, located at 421 E. Fourth St., right at the edge of the Carleton University campus. The organizers are expecting crowds around 2,500-3,000 attendees.

The event will be emceed by meteorologist Sven Sundgaard and Robby McEachren. The City of Northfield will be providing the use of their mobile stage and the electricity for the event.

The program for June 3 will include a Drag Story Hour, Pride Cardio with the local YMCA, speeches by local officials, performances by local drag performer Mrs. Moxie and Lexi D of the Catwalk Party in Fergus Falls. Northfield's trans-owned gym Misfit BJJ will lead a self-defense demonstration. The program will conclude with an LGBTQ elders panel.

Northfield Pride will crowning their 2023 Pride Ambassador. The recipient will be a local individual who has done a lot for the LGBTQ community this year, voted on by attendees. Plus, they will announce the winner of the Pride in the Park Scholarship Award. This is a $1,000 award to a graduating LGBTQ high school senior, nominated by a teacher or other adult in their life

The Pride Committee is expecting around 55 exhibitors and vendors. Vendors will offer food, art and jewelry from LGBTQ artisans. You can also connect with statewide resources, such as RECLAIM, Transforming MN, and Trans Soup, along with local organizations and churches.

Come to Northfield and celebrate Pride! ▮

Rochester Pride

BY AURORA SMITH

This year's Rochester Pride will be held on Saturday May 20th from 12:00-5:00 PM at Soldier's Field Memorial Park near downtown.

Rochester Pride's goal is to provide events for gender identity and sexual orientation minority communities and their allies that inspire, educate, and celebrate the diverse community.

History

Rochester Pride began in 1998 under the name Rochester's Pridefest. The Gay and Lesbian Services of Southeastern Minnesota (GLCS) organized and held the event every year for the following two decades.

In 2022, GLCS passed the event to LGBTQ+ residents who came together to form a new nonprofit they named Rochester Pride.

Rochester Pride is dedicated to celebrating LGBTQ+ identities and strives to build upon the previous organization's work as they look toward the future. As Rochester grows, there are new opportunities to support people of all identities and orientations.

Things to Do

While in Rochester celebrating Pride, there's lots to do! You can explore downtown's exceptional dining, varied shopping, and unique nightlife. Enjoy a relaxing day at Rejuvenate Spa or energize yourself with a class at Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program.

Take in a beverage at one of Rochester's seven different wineries and breweries. Or, for the outdoorsy types, the opportunities to enjoy running, hiking, skating, biking or walking throughout Rochester are endless.

Arts, culture, history, and entertainment abound in Rochester. ▮

(Left) Photo courtesy of Northfield Pride In the Park (Right) Photo by Randy Stern

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Saint Cloud Pride

BY SUSAN SWAVELY

Even though Saint Cloud seems to celebrate queerness and pride all year, September 11th-17, expect to see all of your favorite Saint Cloud Pride events back in a big way!

St. Cloud Pride Chair, Cody Klimek and his team have been hard at work making a wonderful schedule of pride events to celebrate this year. To start off, St. Cloud will have "Show Your Colors" all week, where, according to Klimek, "We encourage the community to display their Pride Flags and other decorations outside their businesses and homes during St. Cloud Pride Week… to show community support of the LGBTQ+ Community."

St. Cloud Pride kicks off with a Pride Skate, Monday, September 11th, and then continues with many more daily events; including a Pride and Peace walk on Tuesday, Pride Trivia on Thursday, Youth Pride Dance Party and a SCSU Drag Show on Friday, Pride in the Park on Saturday at Lake George/Eastman Park, where Klimek says, "Rain or Shine, we will be here! This family friendly Pride event will have vendors, food vendors, games, art, and musical acts on an outdoor stage, including a Puppy Parade where people can enter their canines in a costumed puppy parade," and a 21+ Drag show on Saturday night, with an afterparty to follow.

The week concludes with the St. Cloud Pride Parade on Sunday, September 17th.

Don't miss out on all the fun and support from local businesses and organizations. It's like Klimek says, "It is a time to celebrate our uniqueness, our art, and love."

To check out the full schedule, visit www.stcpride.org/events and scroll to September! ▮

Saint Paul Pride Festival

BY LAVENDER

This year, the city of Saint Paul cannot be ignored when it comes to celebrating LGBTQ Pride.

To be held at Rice Park on June 10, the Saint Paul Pride Festival will be focused on underserved populations within the LGBTQ community. The festival is free to the public and will run from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

The event will be hosted by comedian Ashli Henderson with a Pride Stage featuring artists, such as Karaoke King Nikko Blaze, JD Steele and his choir, and BdotCroc. A headliner will be announced soon.

Expect various food, drink, and other vendors at the park. Featured vendors include Gambit Brewing and MetroNOME Brewery, the former featuring a "Pride Beer." Food will be highlighted by top Soul Food Chef Lachelle Cunningham featuring her "Cheesy Grit Fritter & Aioli Sauce." "Pride Dogs" will be available from Top Dog & Project RestoreMN.

A Youth & Families Zone will be set up for all ages. This area will have a live mural, interactive arts, interactive activities, interactive dance, and much more.

Event organizer Kyle Rucker stated that "We value our community and want our young people and attending families to have engaging, educational & intellectually nutritious content."

Importantly, the Saint Paul Pride Festival is partnered with Project RestoreMN to ensure that the festival "enhances the quality of life for young people and raises the bar on how we can model economic vitality for our youth and our community's future."

For more information of the Saint Paul Pride Festival, log on to www.stppride.org ▮

(Left) Photo by Sophia Hantzes
(Right) Photo by Randy Stern

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Stillwater Pride

BY LAVENDER

The city of Stillwater is ready to welcome the LGBTQ community to the shores of the Saint Croix River for a week of activities. The festivities will run August 3-7 at various venues across the city.

It all kicks off with *Lavender Magazine*'s First Thursday on August 3 at the Water Street Inn (101 Water St., S.) on Papa's Rooftop. The festivities start at 5:30 PM with complimentary hours d'oevres and happy hour drink specials. It is free to attend, and everyone is welcome to help kick off Stillwater's Pride week. You get to celebrate on a Thursday evening overlooking the Stillwater Lift Bridge.

On August 5 and 6, you can take advantage of Stillwater Pride discounts at participating businesses across the city. You can also take advantage of some giveaways and prize drawings at these businesses throughout the weekend.

Sunday morning means brunch. How about a Drag Brunch for a cause? The Puppies and Pumps Drag Brunch is happening at the JX Event Venue (123 Second St N.) right in the heart of downtown Stillwater on August 6. While enjoying drag performers along with your brunch and cocktails, you can also adopt a pet from the Fur Forever Animal Rescue.

Stillwater's Pride week does not end until Monday evening, August 7. Join in on the 26th annual Scott Zahren Memorial Cruise on the Saint Croix River. This cruise will benefit Hope House of Saint Croix Valley.

For more information on these and more events, log onto www.lavendermagazine.com/stillwaterpride ▮

Valley Wide Pride Fest Hudson, WI

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

Live in the Hudson or Saint Croix Valley area? Afraid of missing out on all the pride fun? Never fear! Non-profit Hudson Pride Co. is putting on their *first ever* Valley Wide Pride Fest on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at Lakefront Park in Hudson, Wisconsin, from 9 am- 8 pm. This is a full day jam-packed with live music from local LGBTQ+ musicians, community vendors, food trucks, and more!

Dubbed "Valley Wide Pride Fest," this event calls out to not just Hudson residents, but anyone living in the greater Saint Croix Valley area, meant to truly celebrate and support the entire Saint Croix Valley's LGBTQ+ community.

This event is family-friendly and will include a kid and teen tent with face-painting, a photo booth, and an arts and crafts table. Hudson Pride Co. is also working with a local yoga studio to provide a relaxing morning yoga session on the lawn in front of the bandshell to start the day from 9-10 am.

If you're looking for places to go after the festival, check out Hop and Barrel Brewing (they will have a wrestling match on June 17 with Iron Heart Pro, who have been very supportive of Hudson Pride!). There are many other great bars and restaurants throughout Hudson to check out, so stop on in.

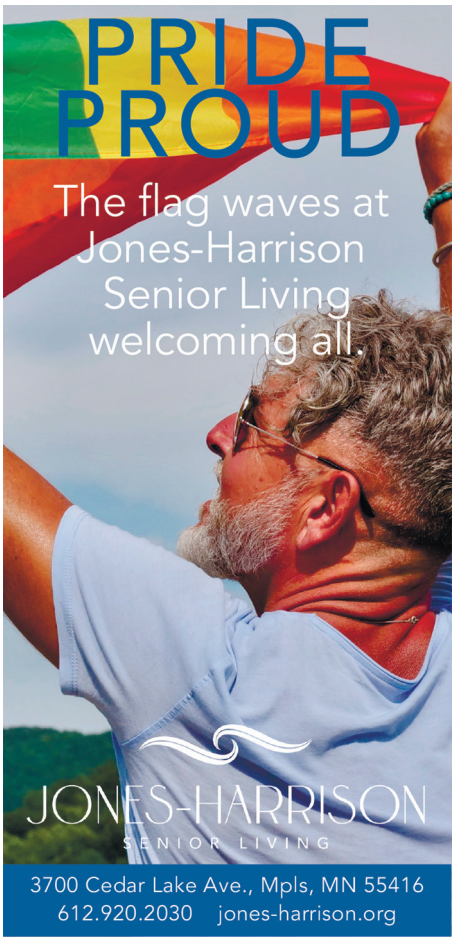
Valley Wide Pride Fest will also have a few donation boxes to donate school supplies to local non-profit "The Sharing Tree," upon entry, and encourage everyone who attends the festival to bring a little something, it goes a long way!

Hudson Pride Co. is looking forward to bringing the community together, and hopes "this is a culture shift for the area bringing visibility, support, and resources to the queer and LGBTQ+ community of the Saint Croix Valley." ▮

See you there!

Valley Wide Pride Fest
Saturday, June 17, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.
Lakefront Park
505 First St., Hudson, WI

Photos by Randy Stern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West Saint Paul Pride

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

When West St. Paul Pride originated, it focused on creating a safe space for the community and allies to gather together and celebrate each other. The gathering started as one afternoon filled with stories, lunch, bounce houses, and vendor tents. Today, that small gathering blossomed into a huge celebration of LGBTQ family and allies. According to their website, WSP pride continues to expand each year as a means to cherish and lift up the LGBTQ folks who call WSP their home.

This year, WSP partnered with the Dodge Nature Center Farm for barnyard tours. Attendees could bring a free plus one to their barnyard tour to see baby chickens, pigs, cows, and lambs, on May 6.

If you like roller skating, WSP has the perfect event for you. On July 7, strap on your rollerblades and head over to Harmon Park Hockey Rink to dance, skate, and mingle during the Pride Skate Party. The following day, July 8, meet at the West St. Paul Sports Complex for five hours of Pride in the Park. Pride in the Park showcases vendors, performers, local organizations, and vendors all dedicated to one larger idea: to show support and connectedness to the community. The activities begin at 11 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m.

WSP also presents an annual Community Advocate Award to LGBTQ advocates belonging to WSP or working to help WSP. To nominate someone, visit the website and click on the link. ▮

Wright-Sherburne Pride

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

It's never too late to develop a Pride tradition. 2023 is the right year for Wright, Minnesota, and for Sherburne, too. For the first time ever, both Minnesota cities will celebrate joint pride festivities on July 8 in Ellison Park, Monticello, Minnesota. According to Emma Hamlin, an organizer of this year's inaugural event, "This will be the first ever Wright and Sherburne County Pride event and it will act as a celebration geographically bridging both the current St. Cloud and [Twin Cities] Prides."

Hamlin says the itinerary is loaded with fun for all ages. Between 11 am and 6 pm, attendees can indulge in delightful meals and snacks supplied by the best vendors in Minnesota and share their time with entertainment by local bands and performers. In addition to live entertainment, businesses, and educational resources will set up booths for visitors to learn more about local organizations' involvement with the LGBTQ community and spend time with allies.

After the activities in the park subside, guests can move to a local brewery for a remarkable drag show to showcase Minnesota's best.

For activities near Ellison Park, take a gander at Lake Maria Park, perhaps set up camp to sleep in the middle of nature with Blanding's turtles and Ospreys and beautiful wildflowers, or gather the family and plan a trip to the Emagine Monticello Theatre for movie screenings, axe throwing, and one-of-a-kind monster screens. If you're looking for a quick, eco-friendly way to jet around Monticello, check out the Pedego electric bikes. ▮

Photos by Randy Stern

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Reclaimed Pride?

BY MARK SEGAL

If you ask any of us who were part of organizing or marshaling that very first Pride in New York in 1970, you would hear one word about it: joy. Yes, it was a protest that came one year after Stonewall, but it was also a celebration of our fighting back. We were celebrating a community that we had begun to build that included organizations which delivered services, information and activities to the LGBT community, services that for the first time were not centered around then-illegal clubs and bars.

So, Pride actually translates to protest and celebration, and that Pride came from walking out of our West Village, Christopher Street Ghetto and marching publicly uptown to Central Park. We were Out, Loud, and Proud!

Today across the country there is a movement to "reclaim" that Pride. That can't happen, since there can only be one original pride. Today's activists aren't the same as the ones who created Pride in New York or Philadelphia.

The ones who created it in Philadelphia were a brave lot. Most were from Gay Activist Alliance, Homophile Action League, Gay Raiders, Radical Queens and Temple Gay Students, toss in some fairies, and that was it.

So who was part of that first Pride in Philadelphia, and how inclusive were they? I asked Tommi Avicolli Mecca, who now lives in San Francisco but in the early 70's was part and parcel of all things LGBT here in Philly. I particularly wanted to ask about BIPOC, Trans people, and non-binary people.

"As I remember it," Tommi said, "people of color and trans people who were involved with the 72 and 73 march include: Cei Bell, Kiyoshi Kuromiya, Ada Bello (who was Cuban, if I remember correctly); a black lesbian whose name I can't remember, I think she was from HAL; possibly Saj and Ray Henry (a black gay man from Temple GLF); myself and Sweet Basil Razzle Dazzle (from Philadelphia GLF, who did genderfuck, also known as radical drag). I identified back then as a drag queen or simply a queen. I identify now as gender non-conforming."

Saj and I would go on to disrupt TV shows as part of the Gay Raiders, but at Pride, Saj did his day job, so to speak: he was part of the entertainment.

Those early Philadelphia marches in the 70's were loose but had many of the elements of the New York march. If you took pride in yourself and your community, you were welcome to march. It was the one day we'd put down our differences and unite. It made it a joyous occasion which reminded me of the very first Pride in New York 1970 where I was a marshal. At about 17th street, I stopped for a moment and climbed a pole, and when I looked back I could still see people coming out of Christopher Street. It sent a chill of happiness down my back which I have never felt again in all these years.

Here in Philadelphia in the early '70s Prides, like New York there was room for anyone and any identity, the idea was to make it possible for all who wanted to be a part to feel included. That went even as far as our parents.

My mother was one of them. Her last Pride was 1977, and at that point she was in the last stages of kidney failure, so the Pride Committee hired a horse drawn carriage so she could be with us one last time. To keep her company, Don Pignolet's mother sat with her, and our fathers and other parents walked alongside with that sign "parents of Gays."

In this season of Pride there is only one word I have for you: joy. Pride should bring you joy in yourself and your community. ▮

Photos by Randy Stern

The Other Practical Hybrid

BY RANDY STERN

For 23 years, our idea of a practical hybrid vehicle has been the Toyota Prius.

It's true. The past three generations of the hybrid hatchback were our default. Practical? Yes. Roomy? Yes. Efficient? Absolutely!

For the past few years, the Prius had some company. Not just from its own Toyota lineup, but from its competitors. One of them has slowly sunk into our own consciousness.

We're talking about the Kia Niro.

Compared to the Prius, the Niro was developed as a crossover, first. It was more practical, more spacious, and more versatile. Performance was on par with the Prius, but the Niro fell short in fuel economy expectations and looked even humbler compared the Toyota,

Now, there is a new Niro for 2023. In this case, Kia decided to shake a few things up. It no longer looks like a humble hybrid crossover anymore.

What we get is a future-forward exterior design that takes inspiration from Kia's latest models. It is a clean sheet design overall. The headlamp units are now lower on the front clip, combined with the lightning units, daytime running lights, and turn signals. It is a clean design before you get to the roofline.

The profile is upright, but not as wagon-esque as in the last generation model. Instead of a pane of glass on the C-pillar, our SX Touring tester sports a contrasting paint scheme that offsets the main paint job. The taillights frame the upper part of the rear pillar, framing with the liftgate's glass.

For a sporting look, our SX Touring tester adds 18-inch alloy wheels for an extra cool factor. That is the essence of the new Niro – it is now a cool looking vehicle.

Interior-wise, the Niro takes on elements from its more recent models. The dashboard and center console gave us EV6 vibes – the battery-electric vehicle. The same vibes are found in recent Sportage models as well. The full screen digital instrument cluster is shared on the same piano black panel with our model's 10.25-inch infotainment touchscreen.

Continued on page 40

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The center console is also in piano black with the ignition switch located on it. Instead of a knob to control the transmission, you get an actual shifter. The steering wheel is also influenced by the EV6, as well.

There is seating for up to five people. The SynTex front seats are rather comfortable and offer plenty of adjustments, along with heating and cooling. Rear seat room is good for two adults or three children. Behind the rear seats, you can load up to 22.8 cubic feet space. By folding down the rear seatbacks, that space expands to 63.7 cubic feet.

For our tester, we got the hybrid driveline. That starts with a 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine with an electric motor. Total combined performance is rated at 139 horsepower and 195 pound-feet of torque. This is attached to a six-speed dual-clutch transmission, driving only the front wheels.

This driveline is pretty decent. Not a barn burner, but it is motivated to get you around town with ease. It is also pretty good on the highway, We also observed a fuel consumption average of 45.6 MPG, which is quite efficient.

We found the Niro's ride quality just fine. Rougher road surfaces put the Niro's suspension system at work by absorbing ruts and potholes. Handling was very good, a bit the softer side at times. The Niro manages tight maneuvers quite easily due to its smaller size.

In turn, the Niro's steering system has a nice turning radius. On-center feel is also quite good, but there is a somewhat lighter feeling overall. The brakes were also very good overall. We liked the solid pedal feel, which returned good stops in normal, panic, and winter situations.

Pricing for the new 2023 Kia Niro starts at $26,590. Our SX Touring Hybrid tester came with a sticker price of $36,435. You have a choice of five hybrid, two plug-in hybrid and two battery-electric trim levels to choose from.

Before you call the Kia Niro the "alternative" to your Toyota Prius, understand your needs. If you need a much more boxier cargo hold, a roomier space for four to five people, and the design that actually stands out a bit more, this new Niro might just be it. It is certainly a standout among other affordable electrified vehicles in its class. ▮

Episode 6

BY LAKEY BRIDGE

Five important things happened to me last week:

1) I had a very disappointing experience with lima beans: a vegetable that has never let me down. Lima beans are the only vegetable I eat out of a can. I love to add them to rice. (Cook the rice and then add lima beans and fresh dill. You will not be sorry.) I was preparing this dish to give me some comfort after experiencing Nos. 4 and 5 below. But when I opened the can, the lima beans were mushy—not the hardy, little green soldiers I've always relied on. I was too sad to return to the store. They let me down when I needed them the most.

2) I had my first colonoscopy. I recently turned the age when you are told to get preventative screenings. So, ticked off the colonoscopy and mammogram boxes last week. It also was my first experience with anesthesia. It was propofol. The nurse called it the Michael Jackson anesthesia because it's the one that killed him. I can understand why he got addicted to it. One of the side-effects is that it gives patients good dreams. I had a dream that I was on a date with the lady doctor who was doing the procedure. We had a nice time! Oh, and my results were fine.

3) I learned that one of my renters (I own a few rental cottages in a resort town) was a former contestant on *The Bachelor*! After the rattling events of Nos. 4 and 5 below, I hightailed it to one of my open rentals to hide out. On this day, I felt like a sleepwalker—as if I was still under the dreamy properties of propofol. Everything seemed blurry and not quite real—like living in an impressionist painting. In mid-afternoon, there was a knock at my door. It was one of my renters' mothers. She'd seen my car and thought she'd drop over for a chat. I'd met her only once. How did she know my car? Who just drops over for a chat? But she had a plate of cookies, so I let her in. She stayed for two hours. She did most of the chatting. Somewhere amid detailing the weirdly fascinating mundanity of her life (she has many adventures at swap meets) she revealed that her daughter—my renter—was a contestant on an early season of *The Bachelor*! She made it to the final contestants and was "a fan favorite." (This checks out. I Google it.)

4) I received news that I have a "mass" in one of my breasts. "Don't panic," my doctor said. "I'm not sure how I'm not to panic once the word 'mass' is introduced into the conversation," I responded. My doctor said that the size and shape indicate that it's almost certainly benign. (This checks out. I Googled it.) I go in for other scans in a few weeks. It's probably fine. But I'm scared.

5) I left my spouse. This is what's called burying the lede in the news business! We experienced a major crisis two years ago and have been struggling to right the ship since. It's been miserable. I know what it feels like to want to leave a relationship, so I know that I didn't leave because I wanted to. I left because I had to. We just kept slamming into the same wall repeatedly and neither of us had the wherewithal to grab the wheel and swerve. But after the breast "mass" news, I grabbed the wheel.

After the drama of screaming the phrase "I want to separate," something magical happened. My leaving broke the terrible spell we'd been living under—for both of us. Suddenly, the problems that were insurmountable seemed no more life-shaking than not being awarded a rose on The Bachelor. Sometimes you need to dangle your legs over the abyss before realizing the difference between dire and just a disappointing can of lima beans.

I'm back home now. Finally waking from the stupor of the past two years. Unlike propofol, the anesthesia that's numbed me for many months has not been pleasant. Marriage isn't easy. You hit bad patches. You slam into walls. But like many breast "masses," it's often not deadly. You will be fine. ▮

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